UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1994/37/Add.1
E/ECE/1304/Add.1
11 August 1994

Original: ENGLISH

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE

REPORT OF THE SPECIAL SESSION

(22 June 1994)

1. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 5 of Commission decision J (49) - ECE's contribution to the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women - which agreed that action to accredit non-governmental organizations without consultative status with ECOSOC should be taken by the Commission in June and September, the Commission held a Special Session on 22 June 1994. It was attended by representatives from Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and United States of America. Representatives of the European Union and its Commission also participated in the meeting.

2. A representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) participated in the meeting.

3. The meeting was opened by the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Ludwik Dembinski (Poland).

Adoption of the Agenda

4. The Commission adopted its agenda as contained in document E/ECE/1305/Rev.1.

Accreditation of NGOs without consultative status with ECOSOC to the ECE High-level Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Fourth World Conference on Women

5. The Chairman recalled that the Commission had by its decision J (49) extended until 1 August 1944 the deadline for application by NGOs without consultative status with ECOSOC to participate in the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting. It had also agreed to take action to accredit those NGOs by meeting in June and in September 1994. He drew the attention of delegations to the list of NGOs contained in document E/ECE/1306 and proposed that the list be approved. Since no delegation had any objection to the list, it was approved.

Cooperation between the Economic Commission for Europe and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

6. In introducing this item the Executive Secretary explained the proposals submitted by the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization to withdraw FAO posts from joint units with the regional commissions in order to strengthen FAO regional bureaux. He noted that the FAO Council had approved the proposal and called for cooperation with regional commissions. He recalled his discussion of the matter with the Secretary-General and with the Director-General of FAO, and indicated that consultations between FAO and the regional commissions on the implementation of the proposals would take place in the near future. He informed delegations that a significant reduction of FAO resources could be expected, and sought their views as to the most appropriate cooperative arrangements to maintain proper servicing of ECE activities in agriculture and timber and, if not possible, which ECE activities in this field Governments wished to retain.

7. The delegation of the Russian Federation emphasized the importance which its Government attached to ECE work on agriculture and timber, and recalled the recent resolution adopted by the Committee on Agriculture. It noted that the FAO decision envisaged appropriate consultations to retain fruitful cooperation with the regional commissions, taking into account specific conditions and requirements of the respective regions. It saw this as an important element in the forthcoming consultations between FAO and ECE. It also stated its readiness to support action by the Executive Secretary to obtain additional resources to offset the withdrawal of FAO posts.

8. The delegation of Germany, speaking on its own behalf, interpreted the reference in the FAO proposals to retaining fruitful cooperation with regional commissions as an indication that FAO posts should be retained in the ECE. It also recalled the recent resolution of the Committee on Agriculture which it felt was a clear expression of the views of ECE member Governments.

9. The delegation of Finland recalled the statement of the Nordic Group to the recent FAO Regional Conference for Europe in which it had supported a review of the role of joint units. Given the usefulness of the Joint ECE/FAO Unit, it expressed support for maintaining the status quo.

10. The representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization confirmed the statement made by the Executive Secretary, and indicated that the forthcoming consultations between FAO and the regional commissions would focus on transition measures to ensure the implementation of mandated programmes and new forms of cooperation. He recalled that delegations of Germany and Finland had participated in the deliberations of the FAO Council where the proposals of the Director-General had been approved. He added that the new FAO regional office to be set up in eastern Europe could be expected to offer at least the same level of assistance to countries in transition as the present Joint Unit.

Other business

11. The delegation of Germany raised the issue of post vacancies, especially of Directors of Division. It expressed appreciation of the efforts of the Executive Secretary to overcome the problems, which it recognized were in most cases beyond his control. However, it was concerned that the Commission had on many occasions requested improvements in recruitment procedures without success. It stated the aim to ensure that candidates were appointed before incumbents left, so that posts were not left vacant and Divisions without Directors for an unduly long period. In accordance with the resolution adopted at the Special Session in October 1992, it sought information on the state of the recruitment process.

12. The secretariat in reply referred to the status of recruitment circulated to the meeting on an informal basis, and stated its intention of discussing all cases with OHRM during its forthcoming visit to United Nations Headquarters.

13. The Executive Secretary referred to his recent discussion with the Secretary-General on that subject, and indicated that the list of current vacancies would be discussed in depth during his visit to Headquarters later in the week.

14. The Chairman indicated his intention of convening the next Ad Hoc Informal Meeting in the second half of September. He pointed out that there would be a need to convene at that time a further Special Session to complete the Commission's approval of NGOs to be admitted to the ECE Regional Preparatory Meeting on Women.